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SUBJECT: TURKEY: 8TH ANNUAL TIP REPORT: VICTIM PROTECTION
AND ASSISTANCE

REF: A. SECSTATE 2731
[B. 07 ANKARA 2893](#)

[1](#)1. (U) Sensitive but unclassified. Please protect accordingly.

[1](#)2. (U) Post's responses are keyed to reftel A questions.
This is part 3 of 3 (septels).

VICTIM PROTECTION AND ASSISTANCE

[1](#)A. (SBU) Foreign victims identified by Turkish authorities may apply for humanitarian visas and remain in Turkey for up to six months. According to MFA reports, the GOT issued three humanitarian visas in 2007 (and 38 since 2004). The humanitarian visas carry a six-month residence permit and the option to extend for an additional six months. Victims in Turkey under the visa are permitted to work. Most victims, however, choose to return to their country of origin. Identified victims are not required to pay normal departure fees or fines and the GOT does not take steps to bar re-entry to Turkey. Identified victims are not deported and are entitled to free legal, medical and psychological services (see para B, below). IOM, in partnership with shelter administrators Human Resources Development Foundation (HRDF) and Foundation for Women's Solidarity (FWS), assist victims returning to their countries. Shelter and law enforcement officials ensure victims' safe return using the following techniques: TNP, in cooperation with MFA, request documentation for the victim from source country authorities (embassies); victims are permitted to await departure in special, secure departure lounges; document check is handled separately and victims are escorted directly to the airplane (or border crossing); MFA provides information on the victim's repatriation to source country authorities to prevent re-trafficking.

[1](#)B. (SBU) The GOT provides trafficking victims free access to shelter, and legal, medical and psychological services. Foreign victims have the same access to care as domestic victims. The country has two shelters dedicated to assisting trafficking victims. One shelter, operated by HRDF, is located in Istanbul, and the other, operated by FWS, is in Ankara. In 2007, the Istanbul shelter provided care to 64 victims; the Ankara shelter to 45 victims. The shelters offer a full range of psychological, counseling, vocational and legal services. The Ministry of Health provides free medical services to victims. One HRDF shelter employee and one FWS shelter employee participated last year in a Department-sponsored TIP IVLP, along with a counterpart from

the Turkish National Police (TNP) and the Ministry of Justice (MOJ). The two shelters are presently funded by the European Commission (EC) through a two-year, 3 million Euro comprehensive anti-trafficking project. Under the new national action plan currently awaiting the Prime Minister's signature, the GOT will assume direct funding responsibility for the shelters at the completion of the EC project (see part 1, septel). The Istanbul and Ankara municipalities provide shelter facilities free of charge, and the Ankara municipality includes all utilities. The Istanbul shelter was financed during the reporting period with a direct YTL 200,000 (\$167,000) allocation from the Prime Ministry Social Solidarity Fund (the "Fund"). IOM granted an additional YTL 75,000 from Norwegian/Swedish-provided funds. FWS received 75,000 YTL in 2007 from the Fund to cover Ankara shelter expenses, and IOM gave YTL 80,000 from Norwegian/Swedish-provided funds. The Canadian aid agency provided the Ankara shelter an additional YTL 4,000. Funds for the Ankara shelter proved to be inadequate for FWS when the GOT and EC faced delays in finalizing agreement on the anti-trafficking project that was to fund the shelters over the subsequent 17 months (see part 1, septel for additional project information). FWS was thus forced to curtail salaries in order to meet expenses (ref B). The Ankara shelter did not cease operations, however, and the funding situation has resolved itself upon the agreement's finalization.

1C. (U) The GOT provides funding and other support to HRDF and FWS to operate the shelters in Istanbul and Ankara; the Istanbul and Ankara municipalities provide the shelter facilities rent-free (see above).

1D. (SBU) The GOT has a formal system for proactively identifying trafficking victims. The procedure is as follows:

- In the province where the crime is committed, the TNP or Jandarma conduct an initial interview with a psychologist and attorney. Any potential victims and/or any foreign person apprehended at a crime scene are referred to the TNP, Foreigners Department;
- A joint interview of the potential victim is conducted by the expert police liaisons to the Ankara and Istanbul shelters and experts from IOM and HRDF (if near Istanbul) or FWS (if closer to Ankara), always including a translator and psychologist;
- After a determination is made that the individual is a trafficking victim, the victim is placed at a shelter.

The sole authority for trafficking victim identification lies with the TNP Foreigners Department, though it actively and effectively engages IOM and NGOs in the process. Any foreign person at a crime scene is automatically referred to the TNP, Foreigners Department, and thus screened by TNP experts.

The GOT identified 148 victims in 2007. IOM assisted 118 such victims in 2007, and assisted an additional 15 through February 15, 2008. The balance of victims rejected IOM assistance and returned directly to their home countries.

1E. (U) As reported in part 2, septel, it is illegal for foreign women to participate in the legal, regulated commercial sex trade.

1F. (SBU) The rights and confidentiality of victims are respected. Identified trafficking victims -- even if they deny their victimization -- are neither deported, jailed nor fined. Identified victims are not prosecuted for violations of other laws. However, depending on the location of the crime scene, some potential victims wait for a few days or more in detention centers until they are interviewed by TNP, IOM and NGOs experts. With Antalya having emerged as a trafficking hot-spot, IOM, in partnership with the EC, has entered into discussions with TNP and the Antalya municipality to develop a dedicated facility there to hold potential victims while they await screening.

¶G. (U) MOJ, through local bar associations, provides free legal services to trafficking victims, including to foreign victims choosing to remain in the country and testify against traffickers. With the support of the Dutch and Swedish aid agencies, IOM is administering TIP training to Turkish bar association lawyers with the aim of developing a core group of experts -- particularly women -- who can provide legal services to TIP victims, including visa and immigration services, and assistance to witnesses cooperating in prosecutions. The Turkish Penal Code contains provisions permitting a trafficking victim to seek restitution in civil court. To date, we are not aware of a victims having filed such a suit. There is no impediment to a trafficking victim's access to legal redress.

¶H. (SBU) The GOT assures victim security and provides victim protection through the Ankara and Istanbul shelters. Security at the shelters is good; there are cameras and alarms. We are not aware of any specific protections afforded to witnesses who are not themselves victims. (See para B above for additional information on the shelters and shelter services.) Once a trafficking victim is placed in a shelter, the victim is part of an international referral mechanism for rehabilitation and reintegration. The shelters provide computer courses and other vocational training to interested victims.

Statistics show that the majority of victims are between the ages of 18-35; few identified victims are children. Juvenile victims fall are under the care of the Prime Ministry Social Services and Child Orphanages Directorate, but are normally placed safely in one of the two shelters.

¶I. (U) The government provides specialized training for government officials to identify trafficking victims and in the provision of assistance to victims (see part 2, septel). Children are a small percentage of trafficked victims, and we are not aware of any specific training on the special needs of trafficked children. However, the TNP provides training on child pornography. Turkish consular officers warn at-risk visa applicants of the risk of human trafficking through passport inserts advertising the 157 helpline in Russian, Romanian, Turkish and English (see part 1, septel). However, nationals from some source countries do not require visas to visit Turkey (see part 1, septel). We have no evidence that Turkish nationals are trafficked abroad. Turkish embassies and consulates would be prepared to offer all available services to any Turkish nationals in distress.

¶J. (U) See above.

¶K. (U) IOM -- of which Turkey is a member state contributing to the administrative budget -- is the principle IGO working with trafficking victims in Turkey. As noted elsewhere, septels, IGO and NGO cooperation with Turkish authorities is excellent. Through partnership with IOM and the GOT, HRDF and FWS coordinate shelter, medical services, psychological and legal counseling, and repatriation services for victims. (See para B, above, for NGO funding information.)

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